

He's Ba-a-ck! Fergusson Audits - September, 2011

Written by Ian Fergusson

Tuesday, 13 September 2011 09:48 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 September 2011 11:35



Welcome back to An Expert's Audit. Every month we'll take a look at a reader's keeper league team in the hopes of helping him toward a championship. If you're interested in getting an audit for your own keeper team you can begin the process by emailing [Dobber](#) about it.

Colin Nash is a white horse dentist. I guess that means he checks the teeth on Lipizanner stallions or something. Ok, I'm an idiot, he's a dentist in Whitehorse. I didn't realize they had Lipizanner's up there though. Colin is in an 11 team points league in which he has been held out of the money for three years running even though they have cash prizes during the season and playoffs. They start 8 forwards, 4 defensemen, 2 goalies and 1 Calder eligible skater. Skaters score by points only and goalies get 2 points for a win and 3 more for a shuttie. At any

rate, it's a long road to the top.

Let's take a look at the team.

F **Jason Spezza** OTT – he's a pt/game guy and if he has some talent to dish to then he can get up toward a pt and a half per game. The Sens are in desperate need of healthy seasons out of their entire top line and they'll need a couple offensive surprises in order to be viable. Spetz is carrying most of the offensive weight on his shoulders and I suspect that it'll be too much to bear... again.

F **Bobby Ryan** ANA – in a season following an MVP year for Perry I've got to think that teams are going to key on Perry and Getzlaf more whenever they enter the offensive zone. That's bound to create all sorts of extra room for Ryan on the other side of the ice. It should be noted that of his 71 points last year only 10 of them came on the PP, so what do you suppose would happen if he got more time with the extra man and he was able to keep up his regular strength production? Yeah, he's gonna bust out.

F **Mike Cammalleri** MON – when he's healthy and all the ducks are in a row then he'll pull down a pt/game for you. If he gets as much as a hangnail though then all bets are off. There has been an offensive void for the Habs that he has been poised to fill for too long now.

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F **Tomas Plekanec** MON – speaking of the offensive void for the Habs, we have another great candidate to fill it up (the void and the net itself). I could see him taking the next step into the upper echelon of the scoring race if everything comes together for him.

F **Rich Peverley** BOS – the trade to Boston last year got him a cup but it'll also mean that his fantasy value tanks. There are too many options ahead of him in Boston and I'd stay away from him in just about any format I can think of. Now having said that, he's not the sort to dump to the wire in a fantasy league (even though he was once waiver wire fodder for real) so I'd look for a taker if I could find one.

F **Tomas Fleischmann** FLA – if the Cats give the opportunity that they apparently have available to them for Fleischmann to play in their top 6 then we could see a decent offensive surprise for him. He's put up 20-something goals once in the past so if he becomes a front line option then I could see close to 30 out of him.

F **Michael Frolik** CHI – This guy needed out of Miami something bad and I see a significant breakout for him with the Blackhawks since he'll be surrounded by a lot more talent. His career highs are 21 goals and 45 points but he'll bust that apart as soon as this season.

F **Kris Versteeg** FLA – I didn't like him as a top option with the Leafs, and I liked him even less

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playing as supportive offense for the Flyers but now as a Panther I could see him returning to his 50 point ceiling once again. If that's what you're expecting out of him then you won't be disappointed.

D **Shea Weber** NAS – that monstrous arbitration award this season is likely going to mean that he gets moved in the next year. Just imagine what could happen to his offensive numbers if he actually had a couple guys down low who could do something with the rebounds that Weber's cannon produces. If he ends up as a Red Wing or something down the road then I wouldn't be all that shocked.

D **Paul Martin** PIT – the former Prime Minister is quite possibly the most overrated offensive option from the back end in the NHL ... maybe J-Bo might be considered more overrated but at least J-Bo has four seasons with at least 30 points while Martin only has three. I'd be looking to move this guy out if I could find a taker.

D **Jay Bouwmeester** CAL – oh great, another underperformer. His last couple of seasons have seen a drop off but I still think he's a better candidate for more offense than Martin is. I think the Flames are really going to miss Regehr and that'll affect the stats of every D in Cowtown immensely.

D **John Carlson** WAS – now this guy has upside out the wazoo. He'll easily be your 2nd best option this season and the time will come that he'll be the anchor of your D's offense. It'd have

to be a pretty sweet deal in order to move him.

G **Ryan Miller** BUF – with the additions the Sabres have made across the board then I think I could make an argument that Miller should be the first goalie taken in just about any format. He's definitely in my top 3 for anchoring any fantasy team. I could see a return to Vezina form now that Regehr, Myers and Ehrhoff get to block shots, bust some heads and lead the attack from the back end.

G **Ondrej Pavelec** WIN – as a Pegger myself I was as excited as the next fan when we got the Thrashers in town, partly because there was this fine young goalie that will remain between the pipes for a lot of years. Unfortunately, given the Jets travel schedule this year I think there's a good chance that they finish in last place. There won't be a lot of W's for Pav but the time will come that you'll love rostering this kid.

BN **Peter Mueller** COL – when Jonathan Toews was wow'ing the world at the Jr. Championships in Fargo he scored goal after shootout goal. The thing that doesn't get mentioned enough is that Mueller scored a couple nice shootout goals for the Americans at the same time. The move to Colorado will either help Mueller a lot as he takes on the opportunity available to him, or else he'll disappear into the fantasy nether regions. I figure that I'll wait for Mueller to contribute this season or else I'm cutting ties.

BN **Antoine Vermette** CBS – he has more value in multi-cat leagues, particularly if they count

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faceoff wins or percentage as a category. In points leagues like yours he has depressed value unless he gets to line up with a significant scorer. There are a couple guys in C-bus who qualify as significant scorers but there's absolutely no guarantee that he'll ever get to line up with either of those guys.

BN Wojtek Wolski NYR – I have this guy in a dynasty league and there's a good chance I turf him completely as soon as I can figure out a better option. He's just a frustrating guy for a fantasy team because he should be getting all sorts of goals down low and yet he's just stinking up my team. He should be kept on a really short leash if you ask me.

BN Nathan Gerbe BUF – he'd only had a couple 10 game tryouts prior to last year and then he was nearly a half point/game player. I'm expecting that his production will continue to increase as the seasons wear on but in the short term Roy will be around for a whole season and Leino will take up a lot of opportunity too so it may be a little longer before he becomes the pt/game guy I want him to be.

BN Shawn Horcoff EDM – he had a 73 point season in '05-06 and then it has been a series of disappointing years and injuries that have stunted his growth. At his age he should try more fibre in an effort to stay regular anyway.

BN Kyle Turris PHX – when the Yotes took him 3rd overall in '07 I couldn't shake the feeling that it was a bad idea. The fact that he came from Junior B was a huge problem for me and I

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kept looking at Sam Gagner thinking that he should've been the pick at the time. If you look at NHL careers in the interim then there's a number of guys that I'd rather have on my team ahead of Turris. At any rate, this is probably a make or break year for the kid, at least in terms of any of my fantasy teams.

BN Artem Anisimov NYR – it'll be a bit of a fight to try and line up with Ryan Callahan on the Blueshirts second line. I think Anisimov has the skills to break into that this season and if he does then I could see him continue to improve on his scoring production like he has for the last couple of seasons.

BN Magnus Paajarvi EDM – I was expecting more outside speed than what I saw out of him last year and I suspect that he thought he'd be able to do that more too. This year should be a bit of proving ground for him as he tries to find more ways to contribute other than blowing the doors off some unsuspecting D-man. We'll see how things go for him but I like his chances.

BN Tyler Seguin BOS – I heard a report that he wants the sort of breakout that Stamkos had in his second season. As a Leafs fan would I ever be annoyed if he turns into Stamkos anytime soon but as a fantasy owner I'd be ecstatic if he approaches anything like Stamkos production. I believe he has the skills to be a game changer and it could happen as soon as this season.

BN Evgeny Grachev STL – at 6'3" I think he projects as a bit of a hitter. Power forwards are fun to watch but they have a lot less value in points leagues than some little water bug who

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dishes out front and skates out of trouble.

BN **Zach Bogosian** WIN – Bogo is going to sign. He took a step back last year from a very nice start to his career and he is a bit sheltered because he doesn't have to be the man on D for the Jets, in fact he doesn't even have to be the 2nd man on D for the Jets. With more seasoning, a dose of badass and some opportunity I think he could be a Pronger type except with a little less production.

BN **Mike Smith** PHX – he should have enough skills to hold off Labarbapapa for the big job in the desert but still I want no part of him on my fantasy team. The Yotes are going to be taking several steps backward this season now that their best player is tending the twine in Philly but the irony would be delicious if the Yotes have to fight the Jets for last place overall. By the way, the Jets fly into Phoenix for an Oct 15/11 game on HNIC and I'm going to guarantee a win for the Jets in the Screw You Cup.

BN **Jonathan Bernier** LA – he'll be the backup but I could certainly see him steal a string of starts and maybe as many as 20 W's this season if things go his way. The time will come that he'll have the blue ice to himself for the Kings and that'll mean a string of 30-40 W seasons.

BN **Ray Emery** CHI – he's been a starter in the past and I could see him stealing the job if anything goes wrong for Crawford. Craw has a ring but Ray has significant attitude that may just lead the way to some big things for the Hawks again. It's definitely a risk but it could pay off

big too.

BN **Michael Leighton** PHI – cool Bryz will start something like 70 games and that'll leave a handful for a backup ... but what about Bob? If you ask me it'll be Bob the backup and we're not likely to hear from Leighton again in the NHL.

BN **Dan Ellis** ANA – he was 1B to Mike Smith in Tampa last year so I don't see him unseating Hiller who is vastly superior to Smith in just about every category. I suppose if Hiller is still dizzy then Ellis will have some work to do but ... Hiller's going to be fine and there's little chance that Ellis has much value this season.

Drop 5, Trading Options and Draft Prep

We had to drop your roster down to 25 players by the end of August so we sought to try and upgrade where possible. Since goaltending had the most value in your league we were trying to shop some tending around to find some young skaters. The trade offer that was going the furthest was to offer up Emery, Peverley and Martin for Kyle Okposo and Sam Gagner or Drew Stafford. In the end this didn't fly and the other guy kept asking for Emery, Plekanec and Carlson instead. We passed on that offer. I just wish that Emery was guaranteed of more work or we could've gotten something done.

In order to trim your roster down to 25 we had to drop 5 names from your roster. There were some obvious candidates for the drop and a little discussion about who shouldn't make the grade. In the end the five drops were Leighton, Ellis, Emery, Horcoff and Grachev. You turfed 3 backup goalies (at best), an oft-injured underperforming vet and a youngster that we determined had the least offensive upside on your roster.

Some of the best news for this team is found in the draft picks available to you. Colin has the 1st

overall pick, the 2nd

overall pick and the 12th

overall pick available to him. There are also no FA picks over the course of the season so there are some interesting vets available along with all of the kids who were drafted this summer.

Among the vets available are

James Reimer

,
Justin Williams

,
Mikhail Grabovski

,
Tuomo Ruutu

,
Michael Grabner

,
Mark Giordano

,
Dmitri Kulikov

, and

Cody Franson

.

The 1st overall pick has to be **Ryan Nugent-Hopkins** and since Colin is an Oilers fan he had no dissenting argument here. At that point however we had to decide what will happen with that 2nd

pick overall and who also might be available at 12 when you pick for the third time.

Gabriel Landeskog

is the most NHL ready kid available in the draft but we decided that since goaltending is valuable in this league there is no way that Colin should pass on

James Reimer

in the two spot. Once the 12 spot comes around then it is hoped that a D worth having is still available and if there's still some offensive upside around then it could very well be that someone like

Grabovski

or maybe even

Grabner

could still fall that far.

Conclusions

I wish we could've gotten a deal done but the only offers that were coming in and the only discussions that were happening were not improvements at all. We had some offers where we could move some goaltending but we weren't getting any offers whatsoever on guys that we could move. I realize we were offering up some marginal options but we also were asking for guys who had disappointed over their short careers.

The good news is that you have 3 picks in the first 12 of your draft, including picks 1 and 2. I've more than suggested that Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and James Reimer are your first 2 picks and then I suspect that someone of significant value will still be around when you get to go again at 12. The question is who will be there at 12? I'm hoping that someone like Grabner or Grabovski is available and if not then you should be able to secure a significant D option like

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Giordano or Franson.

It's a long road ahead of you and you're not winning this league this year, or probably next year too. That doesn't mean you can't surprise some guys and take a few chances for the better over the course of the season but I'm going to recommend patience and moderation to you. You have a little bit of trading room in goal still. Your starters will be Miller and Reimer for the most part this season and Pavelec can spot start as needed or in case of injury. That means that you can hope that Smith raises his trade value because he's a starter or you can go for the big win by shopping Bernier around your league and seeing about getting an excellent young blue chip in return.

It was a fun month Colin. You sent me some fantastic Heli-Golfing pics that made me want to go see the Yukon sometime. In the meantime, keep working on your team and if you have any questions I'm only an email away. Good luck and be patient.